



NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2022

INAUGURAL GOLF DAY WINDERMERE 9TH MAY

The day started with coffee and bacon buns in the lounge of Windermere GC, it was good to catch up with each other and discover what had been happening since the last squash event. **Allen Barwise** explained the team rules of 2 out of 3 scoring on each hole with everyone contributing on the par 3's. An individual prize was also on offer for the day's best golfer. Ball markers were distributed to players to remember the day.

Outside the day was bright, but quite breezy when three teams of three set off on the first tee. First off was **Steve Edmondson**, partnered with **Nigel Belle** and **Ian Bradburn** fresh from his latest operation, getting ready for the new squash season.

Second team out was **Matt Stephenson**, a 3 handicapper, with **Polly Woodward** and **Geoff Howes**, these were the potential dark horses of the competition due to a good range of handicaps.

The last team led by **Allen Barwise**, partnered with **Dillwyn Rosser** and **Chris Howes** ably assisted by buggy driver **Jane Belle**, surely a contender for F1 despite her dodgy parking !!

Windermere golf course is a little quirky with strange outcrops of rock and unusually no bunkers but in fantastic condition and spectacular views of the mountain ranges. These views and some awkward lies, contributed to, at times, indifferent shots from most of the competitors however, the scores coming in were reasonable. The first group recorded 73 points, the 2nd group 78 but the outright team winners were **Barwise, Rosser** and **Howes** with a very creditable 93 points. They did particularly well on the six par 3's with everyone scoring. The star of the show being Dillwyn who had two eagles and a birdie in a magnificent individual score of 40 points. Chris with her shots also did incredibly well on several holes to aid the team score.



Allen Barwise, Chris Howes and Dillwyn Rosser.

The individual prize went to Dillwyn with Geoff runner up.

An enjoyable meal followed with a prize presentation of very nice glass trophies given to the team and individual winners. The nearest the pin awards went to Matt and Dillwyn.

The party then retired to the Brown Horse for liquid refreshments. A good day being had by all.

Allen Barwise



Steve Edmondson, Matt Stephenson, Nigel Belle, Allen Barwise, Dillwyn Rosser, Chris Howes, Jane Belle, Ian Bradburn, Polly Woodward (Geoff Howes took the picture!)

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The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

MARK COWLEY - One Player, Five Questions Interviewed by Aubrey Waddy

*“It’s a life changer.”
But also,
“It is what it is.”*

Mark Cowley is sitting on a sofa in his smart - lift-serviced - apartment, a small oxygen bottle at his feet, talking about the dire results of his encounter with Covid-19. The lift is essential because stairs, even just to the first floor, are impossible on a regular basis, and wouldn't work with Mark's non-electric wheelchair, “top of the range.” He has to use the wheelchair for trips out. Not a hint of complaint though in the whole two hours I was with him. One matter of fact comment, “Obviously I have bad days.”

People who know Mark Cowley will suspect that it was his uncompromising nature that was key in simply not allowing him to die during his long nine months with acute Covid. Initially Mark was unconscious or merely semi-conscious in hospital, and afterwards pretty helpless in a care home. This was in 2020, before vaccination appeared, and experience had been gained in treating acute Covid. Not many people who progressed to the stage of needing sedation as Mark did survived in that first year.

Mark caught the original – for many people devastating - variant of SARS-CoV-2 early in the pandemic (he started feeling poorly in an unmarked van staking out two “high value” bailiff targets). He still has marks on his face from the oxygen mask he needed before being transferred to UCLH (University College London Hospital) to be sedated and given a tracheotomy for his breathing. He was kept unconscious for no less than eight weeks, and clearly remembers the, “hi, Mark,” from the nurse when he came round. He couldn't reply because of the tube in his throat. He was in UCLH all the way through to mid-August. He speaks very warmly about this particular nurse, who provided wonderful support, including helping him deal with nightmares caused by the Covid. His first contact with his wife Bridgette after he became conscious again, via an iPad provided by the hospital, was incredibly emotional.

Mark saw many patients come and go while he was in hospital. Eventually he was told that there was nothing more that could be done for him there – his walking range by then had reached all of ten metres. He was transferred to a care home where his first experience was two weeks' enforced isolation, “a horror.” At that stage he was an emaciated 50kg, against his fighting weight of 72kg. He's now back up to 61kg. Among the less reported problems of a long term hospital stay, in UCLH he developed an enormous bed sore on his coccyx that only finally

healed in March this year, eighteen months later. The photo he showed me is not for family viewing.

Mark's oxygen bottle is connected to a thin tube to deliver the gas. He resorts to it for perhaps half the time, but not when he's asleep. His lungs were severely damaged by the Covid. When he left the care home in November 2020 he needed full time oxygen, so his current status represents progress. And representing Mark's attitude, he has an exercise bike set up in the apartment, with his World and European Championship medals in direct view for encouragement. He has regular visits from a personal trainer. Overall, his condition is still slowly improving.



Mark Cowley

“I can get out, go to a restaurant...” Nevertheless, he has to take “boxes of tablets.” And tellingly, “it's best when you lie down at night.” Mark is part of a Critical Care Group from UCLH, supporting each other with regular Zoom meetings.

What a fascinating chat to have. I'd not known Mark particularly well. He had been a bailiff, that I did know. The squash records show that he won around 20 regional Masters tournaments, an Egyptian Masters o-45 title, three British Opens, two National titles and in pride of place, the 2010 o-55 World Masters gold medal in Cologne. World champion! To all of those titles you need to add ten club championships at The North London Squash Rackets Club, various County age group titles, five Intercountry Masters team championships - with Alan

Thompson, James Ockwell and Dulip Adihetty - and, this is a surprise, one All-Irish team championship, when he was persuaded to turn out for Connacht o-45s, and inspired them to their first ever victory at the national finals in Galway. In 2011 Mark was one of three players, along with Eamonn Price and Fran Wallis, to be given the first annual England Squash Masters awards, ‘to players who had made a significant contribution to Masters squash, both on and off the court’.

Looking through the records, most of Mark's finals wins were won three games to nil. The various times I've watched him, I've always felt that he obliterated his opponents. The scores bear this out.

The Irish connection, and eligibility, come from Mark's family. They moved to London in the 1950s, his parents, two brothers and a sister. They lived in Euston, all six in a two-bedroomed flat, with a scullery in the open landing and a metal bath. The water was heated on a stove. The location determined Mark's early sport, football, and boxing at a local club. Plus swimming well enough to complete a cross channel swim relay. A skiing injury eventually put an end to the football, but by then Mark was enjoying squash, having started to play in a pair of roofless, concrete-floored courts in Khartoum. You had to wait till after sunset, when the temperature had come down a bit, to be able to play.

Squash was Mark's first racket sport. On his return to England, at the height of the squash boom, he had to wait six months to get into the North London Squash Rackets club. He started there in league 14, but rapidly improved. “I hit the ball hard and ran,” nothing changes! In talking to Mark, his extensive thinking about the game, and about his opponents, is obvious. “They've all got frailties.” As he improved, he learned a lot about conditioning from practising with James Ockwell and Dulip Adihetty, together with team mates from Hazelwood and Southgate Squash clubs, and Ian Bradburn and Allen Barwise, “mates from Wigan,” who he used to visit regularly.

Bailiffing was just the most recent of Mark's careers. He is still a director of Marstons, the company he helped develop from a bit player in the sector to number one in the UK. He still does consulting work online for Marstons. Mark started out as an engineer for British Gas. This led to a spell seconded to VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) in Omdurman, on the opposite bank of the Nile from Khartoum. There he lived in a mud hut, and at the age of 23, was introduced to squash. On coming back to England, he remained with British Gas, first as an instructor, then - here he gave a big grin - as a Welfare Officer, and finally in mainstream Personnel. “Being abroad taught me people were different.”

Mark was with British Gas for a total of nineteen years. *Continued on next page*



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

He then set up a joinery business with a friend. That eventually "got hit" during the 1990s recession, and fell on hard times. Mark had always been interested in stocks and shares, and he spent a year as a 'Jacket' in the 'pits' of the stock exchange, playing the markets. He then did a year minicabbing, commenting, "I was lost." An opportunity came up to buy a café, the Chef's Kitchen, in Enfield. The owner told him he wasn't able to make any money from it. Before coming to a decision, Mark sat outside the café for two whole days, simply watching the comings and goings. He transformed the business by wit, for instance a deal with a local baker to supply really nice bread, and hard work. Goodwill provided a large chunk of the substantial price when Mark eventually sold the business.

Why would you leave a set up like that? Well, an ad for bailiffs had caught Mark's eye. "I was just interested to see what they did." He joined Marstons, and after training, started knocking on doors. Fair to say, if Mark arrived at my house, one look and it would be, "Yes, Mr Cowley, welcome! Please come in! There's the tele! There's the code for the safe!

And would you like a cup of tea?" He completed the two rigorous years of qualification, and worked his way up via management to the Board of Directors. "Even in work, I wanted to be the best."

I wish I could have stayed for more of the bailiff stories. One involved a TV documentary, 'The Bailiffs', specifically about bailiffery that Mark had negotiated with the BBC. On a visit that was being filmed, Mark went into a property, succeeded in getting past the woman of the house to reach the mountainous man of the house, his target. Without ceremony, Mark was picked up and carried outside. Fortunately, the presence of a large camera crew, producers, gaffers, hangers on, maybe even David Attenborough, brought the debtor up short and dissuaded him from slamming Mark head first into the pavement.

With bailiffing, "every day was a different day," including the inevitable grapples, filmed or not. From being the smallest firm in the country, the Marston Group has ended up as the largest, employing more than 900 Bailiffs, more accurately 'Enforcement

Agents', and 6,000 staff. Mark was instrumental in trialling body worn cameras for Marstons many years ago, to weed out illegal practices. Today cameras are worn throughout the Police Force.

Mark has two sons from a previous marriage and he is enormously proud of them. Both are doing well, as the photos he showed me confirm. He and his wife Bridgette have been together for ten years. She first saw him playing squash in a county match at Radlett, of which Mark says, "It got feisty." Bridgette told him afterwards, "I didn't know you were like that!" But the ten years are evidence that 'like that' is not how Mark is at home. As for now, with Bridgette's help he is coping with his situation. He's had three emergency visits to hospital since he left the care home. A little while ago he lost balance and fell over backwards going up the steps to the entrance of his apartment block. In probably a good metaphor for his current attitude, Mark told me, "I got myself back up again."

Here in Mark's own words are his answers to the five questions.

1. Who was the best player you ever played? – Ross Norman

For more than five years and something like 500 matches, the legendary Pakistan Squash player Jahangir Khan was not only unbeaten, he was seen to be that rarest of sporting breeds, unbeatable. And then came along New Zealander, Ross Norman. He stunned Jahangir with a four set victory. I had the opportunity to play Ross in the British Open tournament at 0-55, never getting near. He said he did his research on me!

2. What was your hardest match?

Boyd Kidd, Scottish No1, played in the quarter finals of the worlds in Cologne and was 2-0 down and playing badly and dead in the water in the third rubber. My support was fantastic and with them driving me on I managed to fight back to win. Special mention to Peter Alexander, a great competitive player.

3. What squash achievement are you most proud of?

Awarded English player of the year winning the Worlds in Cologne Germany and two European titles. Representing Middlesex County, representing Connacht and winning the Championship for the first time in Galway. Making friends for life throughout GB and Europe.

4. Would you swap your World Championship gold medal for a career with Spurs and twenty goals a season?

YES BUT NO BUT! The Gold medal is something special and I also get a buzz thinking about it today. Making squash friends for life throughout GB and Europe.

Fifth question, chosen by Mark:

5. Would I like to go back in time to change my life?

Answer is No I would not change anything because it's who I am today and what's shaped me, I believe that all events both good and bad, got me to where I am and what I have achieved in Life.

Covid has taken a massive amount away from me just as I was enjoying early retirement and living life to the full.

My message is we never know what's around the corner so live your life to the full now, look back on all the good things – my wonderful family many friends. Squash was a big part of my life and Squash Friends have remained true to me in my fight against Covid.

THE GB VETS ANNUAL TOURNAMENT NEEDS YOU!

(or Pike and the gang will take all the trophies)

So it's time to get those entries in:

Mens Singles O40/O45/O50/O55/O60/O65/O70/O75/O80

Ladies Singles O35/O50 **Non-County Singles** O40/O55/O65

Mens Doubles O40/O50/O60/O70/O75

Ladies Doubles & Mixed Doubles



Matches to be played over the Summer and finals at Colets over the weekend of 3rd/4th September

<http://www.gbvs.co.uk/index.html>

ENTRY CLOSING DATE NOW EXTENDED TO 30th JUNE SO DON'T DELAY, ENTER TODAY!



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

THE CHAIR'S PAGE UPDATE & MESSAGE – JUNE 2022

After a lot advanced planning during the pandemic, GBV were able to hit the ground running as Covid measures eased. There have been lots of matches with reports on the website. England Squash and Squash Masters have put on four tournaments with our members well represented in the entries and Rolls of Honour.

The Newsletter continues to entertain members, including many who no longer play. There are new articles coming all the time and you are encouraged to comment and put forward ideas too.

The fixture list continues to grow with interesting venues and teams. We entertained the Irish this year and the Lords Cricket Ground proved to be a very enjoyable place to play. Similarly, the Civil Service match saw some high standard squash as did the Oxford University games.

I would like to point members to two matches at the RAC in Epsom. On May 12th (See match report on Page 6) and our Festival of

Squash on October 9th. They provide a rare opportunity to play doubles squash on the correct sized courts which is a real treat for those who love doubles.

Membership continues to rise with 8 new members in the last quarter of 2021 and 10 in the first quarter of 2022 to set against the very sad loss of some long- standing stalwarts of GBV.

For those not recently playing, there is now a period to dust off rackets and get back in training for our annual tournament which begins in August.

May I congratulate all those members who represented their Country in the Home Internationals (see report on Page 7). Whilst the European Squash Masters in Edinburgh has been cancelled, at the moment the World Masters in Poland is still going ahead at the end of August.

I wish you all success in whatever you are doing in the coming months.



Ian Graham

MASTER'S PLAYERS MEETING

Most members will not have attended the Squash Masters player's bi-annual meeting at the British Open Masters in April. They announced exciting plans for tournaments at a local level to attract more local players of club standard and increase participation which is an excellent development.

Less interesting but absolutely vital to a growing organisation like ESM

was a new constitution setting them up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Finally, following Mike Clemson's research into the length of matches, ESM will undertake a consultation before the new season to assess whether games should go to 15 points in older age groups. Expect to see some questions dropped into your email boxes soon.

NEW HON. SECRETARY

Our Hon. Secretary, Nigel Belle, who has been doing the job for the last 15 years, has decided to retire at the 60th AGM (our diamond jubilee year) in September 2023. He feels that it is time for a change and for a 'younger' member or members to take over.

He has done a fantastic job but by his own admission he has made a rod for his own back by taking on and adding jobs to the role in his quest to

ensure the members of the Club receive the very best up-to-date, informative, efficient service for their annual subscription.

He tells me it is not an onerous task because, although it takes a bit of time, he thoroughly enjoys the job! However he freely admits that there are at least 5 elements of the job which could be stand alone ones:

- Membership.** Welcoming new members, ensuring the database is always up-to-date, producing a members handbook bi-annually and liaising with the Treasurer and other members of the committee when necessary.
- Archivist.** Keeping important, relevant records of the Club's activities and those of its members. Ensuring the history of the Club from 1963 is kept in good order for generations to come.
- Newsletter.** Probably one of the biggest jobs but a very pleasurable one bringing up-to-date news and views on a regular basis to all members.
- Website.** Liaising with members of the committee and the Webmaster to ensure content is always up-to-date and relevant.
- Secretary.** Ensuring the efficient running of the Club, instigating regular (at least 4 pa) committee meetings (now undertaken on zoom), conducting an AGM, issuing minutes where necessary and generally ensuring all officers of the Club are doing their job!

So do you fancy taking on one, two or all of the Hon. Secretary's jobs? If you are interested please contact me or the Secretary direct. We need to act now as his retirement is just around the corner!

Ian Graham Chair GBV



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

BRITISH OPEN – HULL – 3rd April

5 WINNERS 9 FINALISTS

Eamonn Price lost 1/3 in the final of the MO55.

Mark Woodliffe beat **Allen Barwise** 3/0 in the final of the MO60.

Ian Graham beat **Terry Belshaw** 3/2 (12/10 in the 5th) in the final of the MO70.

Barry Featherstone beat **James Dubois** 3/1 in the final of the MO75.

Adrian Wright won the MO80 3/0.

Keeley Johnson lost in the final of the WO40.

Sarah Parr lost 2/3 in the final of the WO50.

Mandy Akin lost 1/3 in the final of the WO55.

Lesley Sturgess lost 2/3 in the final of the WO60.

Eunice Bond came 2nd in a pool of 3 in the WO65.

Ann Manley won the final of the WO70 3/1.

Members who reached the semis: Matthew Stephenson (MO50), James Barrington, Neil Harrison (MO60), Ripley Oyler, Geoff Redfern (MO65), Ian Ross (MO70), John Smith, Tommy Elves (MO75).

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL

GB VETS VS HURLINGHAM – 10th March

Seldom does just a handful of points make the difference between a 4/1 win and a 5/0 defeat!

But so it was in the match against that glorious

Club that is the Hurlingham, with its fabulous facilities set in 42 acres next to the Thames in Fulham.

4 out of the 5 matches went to 5 games and unfortunately for the GB Vets we were not on the winning end of any of them!

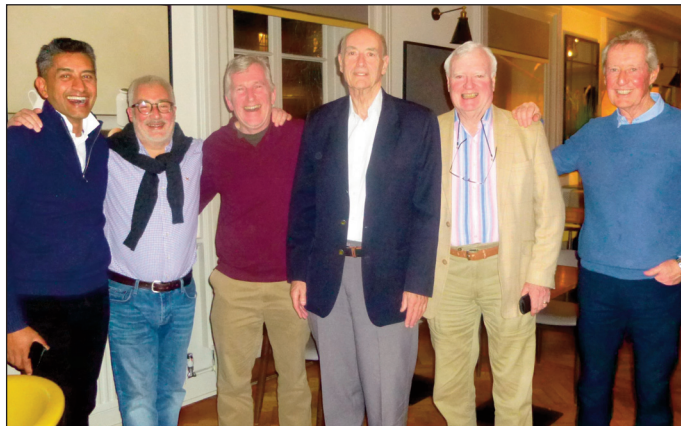
Ash Chakraborty at No.1 faced an agile hard hitting opponent. A see saw match the result resting on a few points at the end of the 5th. 1/0 down.

James Dubois at No.3, fresh from his British National win in the O75's, faced a very young looking, tall athletic opponent. The knock-up did not bode well for James but his dogged perseverance paid off

until the end of the 5th which he narrowly lost. 2/0 down.

Mick Murray at No.2 was on the receiving end

of another difficult opponent. The result of a 3/0 defeat belies the fact that all games were very close. 3/0 down.



Ash Chakraborty, David Parker, Mick Murray, James Dubois, Nigel Belle, Philip Courtenay-Luck

Philip Courtenay-Luck at No.4 looked to be in command early on but his awkward opponent eventually won through in the 5th. 4/0 down.

The last match was doubles played on an extended singles court. **Nigel Belle** and **David Parker** had a great match. 0/1, 1/1, 1/2, 2/2, 11/15 – another defeat!

So a 5/0 win for Hurlingham.

The legendary post match meal and hospitality was as usual superb. Our thanks to Paul Lubbock and the Hurlingham Club for hosting the GB Vets and we look forward to next year when we will be looking for revenge.

GB VETS VS DORKING – 7th April

How great to get back to fun, competitive squash after 2½ years or so of lockdown. Thanks to Tony Heron of Dorking we managed eventually to get a match going and a closely fought match it was!

The redoubtable, everlasting duo of **Lance Kinder** and **John Woodliffe** had a tough but enjoyable doubles battle but went down 3/0 as did **Nigel Belle** at No.4 3/0 in the singles.

James Dubois at No.2, fresh from his heroic efforts in the recent British Open Masters in Hull (losing finalist to Barry Featherstone) went 2/0 up, then lost the next 2 but then tweaked



Both teams

the fifth 15/10.

Robert Smith at No.3, clearly suffering from an injury, put on a brave fight in the first two games, but eventually succumbed 3/0

David Parker at No.1 was in control right from the start winning the first two 15/9, 15/7. A mini fight back from his opponent in the third came to nought and he won 3/0.

So a Dorking win 3/2.

It was great to see Harriet, Bob Gray's wife, at the match and after an excellent meal, liquid refreshment, good company and 'thank you' speeches we all wended our way home vowing to return and win next time!



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

GB VETS VS CIVIL SERVICE – 19th March

CIVIL SERVICE 8 GB VETS 6

On Saturday 19th March the GB Vets met up with a national Civil Service for a match at Nottingham Squash Club. Although a competitive match was anticipated there was some effort to ensure players were well matched. This worked out fantastically as there was some great squash played with 7 of the 14 matches played on the day going the full distance to 5 games.

The Civil Service ran out 6-3 winners in the scheduled fixture but a determined effort from the Vets meant that after some second matches had been played the overall result for the day was a much more respectable 8-6 to the Civil Service.

This was the first friendly social match that the Civil Service have played for a few years and a fixture we very much hope to retain and expand in the future. Many thanks go to Nick Hargreaves and the team at Nottingham Squash Club who made it a great venue for the match. After the evening meal and some short speeches, the remaining diehards headed out into Nottingham for a late night of rehydration therapy.

Alison Goy vs Gemma Barber

Gemma took the first 2 games not allowing Alison to settle. A much tighter 3rd but Gemma dug in to win 3-0.

Geoff Redfern vs Ethan Thornton

A titanic match! The first game, Ethan a little rusty and loose, coupled with Geoff playing a clinical game meant a fast game to Geoff. Ethan pulled himself together and levelled things up to 1-1. After 2 further tight games the decider saw Geoff match ball down, but having clawed his way back to 10-10 then lost the next 2 points.

Nigel Bacon vs Chris Mason-Thom

This was arguably the match of the day. Nigel was a little surprised in the first by his opponents hard hitting, taking the ball early and constant pressure – 0-1 down. 2 close games to Nigel with some draining rallies to take a 2-1 lead. At match ball 10-8 in the 4th his opponent forced a tiebreak and won the game. The 5th followed the same frantic pattern, but it was Chris just getting over the line to take a 3-2 win.

Ray Burke MBE vs Marc Aldridge

This was a brutal match! Neither players gave

an inch throughout this 5 game encounter. Two tight games to Ray and then a determined Marc brought it to 2-2. An incredibly tight 5th game with Ray just a few slightly tighter shots proved decisive. Ray won 3-2.

John Parkes vs Fraser Richards

This was a game of 2 halves. John, recovering from a hip injury struggled and lost the 1st. He then gradually began to lengthen the rallies and sneaked the second 12-10. After that John never looked back as the tables completely turned and he won the next 2 games and the match 3-1.

Tim Burrell vs Tony Webb

These two had recently played in the CSSC national championships and neither player was able to pull away from the other in this match. Neck and neck to 2-2 and in the 5th Tim made a few mistakes caused by some hard hitting by Tony who eventually took it and won 3-2.

Nick Sheppard

A fuller report can be found on our website



Alison Goy vs Gemma Barber



Geoff Redfern vs Ethan Thornton



Chris Mason-Thom vs Nigel Bacon



Ray Burke MBE vs Marc Aldridge



Fraser Richards vs John Parkes



Tony Webb vs Tim Burrell

GB VETS VS RAC DOUBLES – 12th March

RAC 5 GB VETS 0

Another new fixture for this season as the Vets added to the singles match against the RAC Pall Mall with a doubles fixture played in the glorious setting of the RAC country club at Woodcote Park. The squash facilities at Woodcote Park include two full size doubles courts and the game is very popular among the RAC members with a full season of matches being played against other clubs.

Before the match the advice given by a member was “The RAC are very good at doubles, for any team winning a game off them is a miracle and winning a match is unheard of” – we were well and truly warned! Forewarned is forearmed and the vets duly arrived at the courts ready for a tough challenge – which was a good thing as the evening turned out to be an extremely tough challenge but with a high standard of doubles squash played by both teams.

1. **Steve Jackson & John Lane** lost to Ross Greer & Neil Percival 0-3 (8/15, 9/15, 16/17)
2. **Nick Sheppard & Fergus Burnett** lost to Dewi Banks & Oliver Briault 0-3 (9/15, 14/15, 6/15)
3. **James Dubois & Keeley Johnson** lost to Tim Abbott & Luke Edgcumbe 2-3 (17/16, 14/15, 15/12, 12/15, 12/15)
4. **David Parker & Peter Culver** lost to Gath Harbison & Tom Gilbert 2-3 (8/15, 15/10, 13/15, 15/10, 11/15)
5. **Philip Godden & Kim Ricks** lost to David Briault & Phil Borton 0-3 (13/15, 15/17, 5/15)

A fuller report can be found on our website

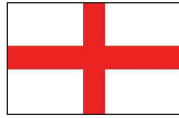
So, 5-0 to the RAC but every match was hard fought and both the James/Keeley and David/Peter pairings were extremely unlucky not to have picked up a win. The match standard was very high against opponents who really do understand how to play doubles and use ball placement and shot angles on the full size court. After the last match finished, the players retired to the 19th Hole bar for an excellent meal and speeches from the captains. This was an excellent evening of squash and we very much hope we can repeat this fixture next season. Many thanks go to Paul Ventham, who organises the doubles season for the RAC, James Dubois, who helped enormously with setting up the fixture, Tim Abbott and his players who gave us such a hospitable welcome and to all the staff at Woodcote Park whose work made the evening possible.

Nick Sheppard



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

HOME INTERNATIONALS



DATES/VENUES

22/23 APRIL

GALWAY

IRELAND

6/7 MAY

EDINBURGH

SCOTLAND

13/14 MAY

NOTTINGHAM

ENGLAND

20/21 MAY

CARDIFF

WALES

COUNTRY	POSITION OVER 14 EVENTS				TOTAL POINTS (Max 840)	GB VETS PLAYERS
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th		
IRELAND	1	3	5	5	319	0
SCOTLAND	1	6	3	4	379	5
ENGLAND	11	2	1	0	676	33
WALES	1	3	5	5	274	3

GB VETS PLAYERS (England unless indicated)

MEN

MO50 Andy Murray (Captain)

MO55 Ray Burke MBE (Captain), Eamonn Price, Nigel Stiles.

MO60 Allen Barwise (Captain), John Parkes, Mark Taylor, Steve Edmondson, Nick Peel.

MO65 Stuart Hardy (Captain), Ripley Oyler, Geoff Redfern, Clark Adam (Scotland)

MO70 Terry Belshaw (Captain), Ian Graham, Barry Featherstone, Peter Smith, Ian Ross (Scotland), Alastair McMeckan (Scotland).

MO75 James Dubois (Captain), Chris Ansell, Martin Pearse, Adrian Wright, Leighton Jenkins (Scotland)

Selected but did not play, Dave Hardern, Tommy Elves.

WOMEN

WO45 Keeley Johnson, Catherine Ruffle.

WO50 Sarah Parr (Captain), Alison Goy.

WO55 Mandy Akin (Captain), Karen Hume, Bev Vacher, Lynne Davies (Wales), Eunice Bond (Scotland).

WO60 Karen Hume (Captain), Lesley Sturgess, Tammy Bennett, Sue Pynegar, Eunice Bond (Scotland), Lynne Davies (Wales)

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL PLAYERS!

A POEM FOR TODAY

Woke up warm and safe in my bed
 While someone else heard bombs over their head
 I jumped into a nice hot shower
 While someone else has lost all power
 I hugged my family, we were all together
 While others said goodbye, possibly forever
 While I fear the money that I will spend
 Others worry of losing the country they defend
 In the time it took for me to write this verse
 Many have lost the things they love most
 So, when I start to bitch and want to complain
 I will stop myself and pray for Ukraine.

A SWEET STORY



Mr Cadbury met Miss Rowntree on a Double Decker.

It was just After Eight.

They got off at Quality Street.

He asked her name. 'Polo, I'm the one with the hole' she said with a Wispa.

'I'm Marathon, the one with the nuts' he replied.

He touched her Cream Eggs, which was a Kinder Surprise for her.

Then he slipped his hand into her Snickers, which made her Ripple.

He fondled her Jelly Babies and she rubbed his Tic Tacs.

Soon they were Heart Throbs.

It was a Fab moment as she screamed in Turkish Delight.

But, 3 days later, his Sherbet Dip Dab started to itch.

Turns out Miss Rowntree had been with Bertie Bassett and he had Allsorts!

Apologies if this story offends



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome the following new members who have joined since the last Newsletter:

Matthew Stephenson - Dunnington Squash
Arthur Harvey - Folkestone
Teejay Sogunro - Nuffield Health, St.Albans
John Culverhouse - Bromley LTSC
Terry James - Market Harborough
Philip Burton - RAC

MEMBER INFO

Don't forget you can access all members details via our website:
www.gbvs.co.uk

Login: **GBVETSSQUASH**

Password: **RACKET7288**

ALL UPPER CASE

'LOST' MEMBERS

Surely someone must know the whereabouts of a 'lost' member below? If so please let the Hon. Sec. know.

Alf Barker
Tim Higginson
Robert McIntosh
Aubrey Smith

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

GB VETS MATCHES

Edgbaston Priory TBC - Edgbaston - 25th June 2022 - *Nick Sheppard*

Northumberland Club - Newcastle - 10th September - *Allen Barwise*

Roehampton - Roehampton - 12th January 2023 - *Nick Sheppard*

OTHER EVENTS

London Squash Festival - Bexley, Kent - 8/9 July 2022 - *Nick Sheppard*

World Masters - Wroclaw, Poland - 21/27 August

GB Vets Golf Day - Surbiton - 5th September - *Geoff Howes*

Festival of Squash - RAC Epsom - 9th October - *Ian Graham*

North Regional - Grove Park - 30th September/2nd October

Midlands Regional - Wolverhampton - 4/6 November

South Regional - Nuffield St. Albans - 9-11 December

East Regional - Ipswich - 13/15 January 2023

WHEN GRAHAM FISHER WON THE EUROPEAN TITLE IN PRAGUE 2013

It was Graham's wife Pat who encouraged him to enter the European Masters Squash Championships that year, fuelled by her love of the game and in no way influenced by the fact that the venue was the beautiful city of Prague! They booked the all-inclusive package which gave them accommodation in the sports complex which was the main showpiece for the tournament. The Perspex court used for all the key matches was being delivered and assembled as we arrived!

It had been touch and go as to whether the Championships would be able to go ahead as two of the Squash Clubs that were venues for the majority of the matches had suffered serious flooding only three months earlier when the River Vltava burst its banks. A remarkable

achievement on the part of the hosts to get the courts back in action.

Graham was having a good season and was top seed giving him a bye into the quarter finals where he defeated Bjorn Borgvall from Sweden, 3-0. Next up was the American, Michael Gough, whom he defeated in a close match 12-10 14-16 11-6 11-8. Nigel Belle had reached the semi in the other half and was then defeated by Berti Walli from Finland who had earlier knocked out the second seed. The final was a great occasion for Graham and the biggest match of his career. In a closely fought match Graham always had the edge and won 3-0 to become Over 70 European Masters Champion.

It was a good day for other GB Vets too, with Chris

Ansell winning the O65 title and Nigel Belle securing third place in the O70's.

This had been an unforgettable week of squash and sightseeing including the Castle and Charles Bridge, home to many souvenir shops and jewellery stores. There was a small price to pay before they left as Graham felt Pat should have some reward for tolerating a week of squash. And so, in the end, both came home with 'trophies' to remember his greatest moment in squash.

Hardest part of the trip? ... getting the trophy back through customs!!

Ian Graham, Chair, GBV

NEWS OF MALCOLM GILHAM

Malcolm, who was a World Champion in Joburg in 2016 and has won many GB Vets titles but who has been off the radar for a while, prompted Adrian Wright to pose the questions 'how is he?' Is he still with us? Well happily he is still very much alive and kicking! Here is his reply to my enquiring email: "Nigel, it was good to hear from you that all is well in the Squash camp. My regards to all the fellow squashers. I wish you well in Poland.

Unhappily, my squash days are over. I have developed Angina, and I can't grumble as I am nearly 88. I was obviously devastated and it has taken some time for me to come to accept.

The situation was helped by lockdown when the club closed down. It was also helped by the squash coach. His mother worked at the squash club but sadly she died at the club.

As soon as he saw me struggling on the squash court he banned me from playing so that settled the issue since he couldn't face another death!

However, living as we do alongside an 18 hole golf course in Newton Green, I have replaced squash with golf. I manage 9 holes 2/3 times a week with a group called the 'Old and Bold' and am starting to enjoy the game. Unsurprisingly I am the oldest in the group!

Shirley and I send best wishes to you all. Kind regards, Malcolm."

As Adrian points out, Malcolm's prowess ranks up there with the likes of Kinder, Kirton and Woodliffe and he remembers with fondness and admiration a Regional against him in Pontefract a few years ago.

FANCY GIBRALTAR?

I am proposing running an event in Gibraltar (club very excited by this) on the weekend of 28/29/30 October. It will be against an International team of approx. 12 players of mixed standard & gender. Numbers will be limited therefore early acknowledgement of participation is crucial. In reality players/guests will have the option of extending their stay either side of the event.

Cost is an unknown as yet, hotels are reasonable and plentiful there, flights are also fairly decent.

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